

Legislation Text

File #: Resolution 53-2018, **Version:** 1

Agenda Date: 09/04/2018

Subject:

A resolution recommending full funding and permanent reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund

Presented By: Mark Relph, City Manager
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REQUESTED COUNCIL ACTION:

Does city council support recommending full funding and permanent reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)?

BACKGROUND:

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) was created in 1964 as a bi-partisan commitment to protect natural areas, water resources, cultural heritage, and to provide recreation opportunities to all Americans. LWCF is funded from royalties paid by energy companies drilling for oil and gas on the Outer Continental Shelf. Essentially, revenues from the depletion of one natural resource are used to conserve other natural resources.

For over 50 years, LWCF has played a critical role in providing funding for conserving national parks and forests, rivers, farms and ranches, fish and wildlife, access for hunters and recreationists, trails, state and local parks, and recreational facilities throughout Colorado and the nation.

LWCF plays a key role with state and local governments to provide resources for local recreation facilities such as parks, playgrounds, and sports fields, but also critical preemptive programs including wildfire and flood mitigation. For example, LWCF matching funds enabled the town of Lyons, Colorado, to rebuild and extend its St. Vrain Corridor Trail, which suffered nearly \$50 million in damages in the devastating floods of 2013. The restoration efforts were significant, not only to quality of life for residents, but in supporting the community's recreation economy, as Lyons' parks can draw some 2,000 people on a typical summer weekend.

Whether Coloradans and visitors are fishing, mountain biking, hiking in the wild, enjoying a picnic in the park with the family, or watching their kids play soccer at the local field, it's likely the Land and Water Conservation Fund played a key role in protecting and providing access to their recreational opportunities locally and across the state.

Outdoor recreation on public lands is integral to the culture and economies of western mountain communities. The Outdoor Industry Association found that active outdoor recreation generates 229,000 jobs in Colorado, \$28 billion in consumer spending, \$9.7 billion in wages and salaries, and \$2 billion annually in state and local tax revenue. Without funding from LWCF for the further protection and enhancement of America's public lands, the economic success and cultural vitality of local communities will be at risk, and the outdoor recreation industry's significant contribution to the nation's economy will suffer.

Funding for this program runs out at the end of September 2018. Moreover, the President's Fiscal Year 2018 Budget proposal would virtually eliminate LWCF, reducing the program's budget by nearly 85 percent from this year's enacted level.

PRIOR ACTIONS OR DISCUSSIONS:

None.

STAFF ANALYSIS:

The continuation of funding for the LWCF supports outdoor recreation, flood mitigation, open spaces, and more, and allows the potential for the City of Littleton to leverage grant funding opportunities for open space and recreation. In fact, it appears Littleton used LWCF grant funds totaling \$189,905.53 in 1974 for Platte River Park, 1975 for South Platte Park, 1979 for Slaughterhouse Gulch, and 1980 for Sterne Park.

If city council approves this resolution, the intent would be to share this declaration with our appropriate state legislators, the Colorado Municipal League, and other affected interests.

OPTIONS/ALTERNATIVES:

Approve the resolution and show Littleton's support for full funding and permanent reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).

Do not approve the resolution, creating the risk of losing funding for natural resources and grant opportunities for Littleton.

FISCAL IMPACTS:

Loss of opportunity for grants and potential negative economic impacts from degradation of outdoor and recreational resources.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends supporting the resolution recommending full funding and permanent reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)?

PROPOSED MOTION:

I move to approve the resolution recommending full funding and permanent reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).